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FORMER WARRANT OFFICER CHARGED WITH SPYING

WASHINGTON (AP) - A FORMER ARMY WARRANT OFFICER WAS INDICTED AND ARRESTED TODAY ON CHARGES OF SUPPLYING THE SOVIET UNION WITH INFORMATION ABOUT A U.S. CODE-MAKING DEVICE.

FBI DIRECTOR WILLIAM H. WEBSTER SAID JOSEPH GEORGE HELMICH, 44, WAS ARRESTED BY FBI AGENTS TODAY IN JACKSONVILLE, FLA., FOLLOWING AN EXTENSIVE INVESTIGATION BY THE FBI INTO THE ALLEGED ESPIONAGE DURING THE 1960s.

ATTORNEY GENERAL WILLIAM FRENCH SMITH SAID HELMICH'S ARREST FOLLOWED HIS INDICTMENT BY A FEDERAL GRAND JURY IN JACKSONVILLE ON CHARGES OF VIOLATING THE ESPIONAGE ACT.

ACCORDING TO THE INDICTMENT, HELMICH COMMUNICATED TO THE SOVIET UNION AND ITS AGENTS CLASSIFIED INFORMATION INVOLVING A SENSITIVE U.S. CRYPTOGRAPHIC SYSTEM KNOWN AS THE KL-7. THE FBI SAID THE KL-7 SYSTEM WAS USED TO ENCODE U.S. COMMUNICATIONS. THE GOVERNMENT ALLEGED THAT THE INFORMATION WAS GIVEN TO THE SOVIET UNION IN PARIS IN 1963.

HELMICH IS A NATIVE OF FLORIDA AND SERVED AS AN ARMY WARRANT OFFICER FROM 1954 TO 1966. HIS DUTIES INCLUDED SERVING AS A CRYPTOCUSTODIAN IN PARIS, FRANCE, AND AT FORT BRAGG, N.C. SINCE 1967, HE HAS BEEN EMPLOYED IN A VARIETY OF JOBS.

THE INDICTMENT CHARGED FOUR COUNTS OF ESPIONAGE. ONE COUNT ALLEGED A CONSPIRACY IN 1963 WITH THE SOVIETS TO ACQUIRE COMMUNICATIONS INTELLIGENCE, WHICH MEANS DATA OR CONVERSATIONS TRANSMITTED BY ANY NUMBER OF COMMUNICATIONS DEVICES. THE THREE REMAINING COUNTS ALLEGED THE TRANSMITTAL OF CLASSIFIED INFORMATION BY HELMICH TO AGENTS OF THE SOVIET UNION.

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